

Luomo *Convivial* - Selected Press Reviews

Textura Review

Listen back-to-back to Sasu Ripatti's first and fourth Luomo albums and you'd swear you're listening to the work of two completely different artists. The Vocalcity debut overflows with ideas, hooks, and a barely-contained vitality and, when it was released in 2000, the material's relative lack of polish proved less a handicap than a refreshing change from the ultra-slick productions genre artists typically issued. Rough edges are absent on *Convivial*, a tightly-crafted hour-long collection of collaborations with singers such as Cassy, Sascha Ring (aka Apparat), Jake Shears (Scissor Sisters), Robert Owens, Sue-C, and long-time Luomo associate Johanna Iivanainen (the album title references the social vibe that permeated the album's production). Largely created in Berlin and completed in Finland (mirroring Ripatti's own relocation from the German capital to his home country), the new album's a somewhat middling affair with some great cuts packaged with some less enthralling pieces.

The opener "Have You Ever" gets the album off to a good start with a ferociously grooving house pulse acting as a more-than-solid base for Cassy's emotive musings. Ripatti weaves a lithe and serpentine bass line, high-velocity beat pattern, and synth stabs into a precision-tooled whole, and, though its laconic demeanour is at cross-purposes to the urgent tempo, Cassy's vocal delivery proves appealing. On "Love You All," Ring shows himself to be the album's secret weapon by delivering its best vocal. Pairing his soaring falsetto swoon with a pulsating tech-house throb proves to be a masterstroke and once again the combination of a languorous vocal melody with a racing rhythm pulse proves successful, and juxtaposing elegiac string melodies to hammering synth patterns likewise works well too. Truth be told, the tracks that follow have a hard time matching the level of the opening pair.

Shears guests on the poppy "If I Can't" which, though decent enough (the intricately woven vocal lines, in particular, call to mind Luomo's previous output), can't help but seem lightweight coming after the openers. "Nothing Goes Away," which features Sue-C who less sings than utters her words in a Sprechstimme style, is likewise passable but hardly signifies a major advance. We get some hint of Robert Owens' vocal gifts during "Robert's Reason" but he's unfortunately reduced to atmospheric vocal colour rather than given an opportunity to showcase his considerable talents; furthermore, by choosing to process his vocals into cut-up fragments, Ripatti negates the soulful impact Owens' untreated vocalizing would have provided so naturally. Presented as a series of chorus swirls, the unidentified singer "Chubbs" similarly adopts a background role in "Gets Along Fine" though the percolating percussive energy of the song goes a long way to compensating for the soulful vocalist's diminished role. Three of the remaining four tracks feature Johanna Iivanainen: a house choir of Iivanainens chirps through the background of "Sleep Tonight," a robustly swinging workout that exudes the kind of grooving heat and fire that's largely contained in the other tracks, while the closing "Lonely Music Co." references Ripatti's past more than any of the other eight tracks. In a manner more reminiscent of Vladislav Delay than Luomo, the synth bass line and Iivanainen's atmospheric presence wend an unhurried path through a hazily defined thicket of percussive clatter and electronic washes. At day's end, *Convivial*'s a solid enough outing, then, but one that won't challenge Vocalcity or *The Present Lover* for Luomo dominance. Regardless, if "Love You All" is indicative of the magic Ring and Ripatti can create together, perhaps the two should consider an album-length collaboration, something along the lines of the Apparat-Ellen Allien pairing *Orchestra of Bubbles* that appeared a few years ago.

RemixMag Review

Still funk'ing things up in Finland: Even though he gets lumped in with the Euro house scene, Sasu Ripatti has consistently punched his ticket with a more engaging and off-kilter techno style that translates as well in the bedroom as it does in the club. He continues that trend with his fourth album as Luomo (one of his many aliases), but this time out, he's teamed up with a grip of singers

that includes Berlin-based Cassy Britton (on the steam-fueled opener "Have You Ever"), Apparat's Sascha Ring ("Love You All") and the Scissor Sisters' Jake Shears ("If I Can't"). If sensual dance music is your drug, this one will knock you out.

XLR8R Magazine Review

If Convivial were a dinner party, prolific producer Sasu Ripatti (a.k.a. Vladislav Delay) prepared by setting the china, polishing the silver, and inviting the glitterati. His fourth, fabulous album refines his exacting style while simultaneously breaking the steely micro mold of 2006's Paper Tigers. Here, frequent vocalist Johanna Iivanainen gossips in the corner with Cassy, while Robert Owens and Scissor Sisters' Jake Shears toast to the absurdity of human emotion. Sue Cie raps, and the increasingly dramatic Sascha Ring (a.k.a. Apparat) invokes Depeche Mode (on the only track that doesn't sound like a Ripatti creation). Luomo's signature underwater-dub veneer is still there, strengthened by the eccentricities of his glamorous guests.

Treble Magazine Review

After seemingly backing himself into a corner with 2006's underwhelming Paper Tigers, Sasu Ripatti bounces back strong with Luomo's newest effort, Convivial. While it doesn't quite revisit or surpass the height of his previous house epics Vocal City or The Present Lover, it finds Ripatti in a much warmer, livelier place, and the change in climate is both refreshing and relieving. As its title conveys, Convivial is Luomo's most accessible album. It's not only more song-driven than any of Ripatti's previous work, but his most human as well. That humanity comes courtesy of his expanded roster of impressive vocal and lyrical contributors. In addition to the return of chief Paper Tigers collaborator Johanna Iivanainen, Ripatti welcomes Apparat, Robert Owens, and Scissor Sisters' Jake Shears among others. The sheer abundance of outside voices could have potentially proved detrimental, but the result is both cohesive and intimate.

That intimacy is felt strongest in the immaculate "Love You All." Apparat lays his languid falsetto over Ripatti's labyrinthine groove, charting a navigable path through his dense layers of strings, beats, and arpeggios. A close second comes in the form of "If I Can't," which finds Shears toning down his usual vocal theatrics in order to service the beauty of the song rather than steal it. Both of these songs rank among Luomo's best as well as most pop-friendly endeavors. Other highlights heed closer to the established formula of Luomo's past heights – the velvety, Owens-aided house of "Robert's Dream," the pensive thrust of "Gets Along Fine" – but still unfold with a renewed sparkle and shine. Even the album's dimmer moments (namely Iivanainen's numbers) are merely overshadowed by its admittedly impressive peaks and work towards maintaining its unity and momentum. Like a much needed breath of fresh air, Luomo's latest clears out all of the staleness and doubt left in the room by Paper Tigers, making way for what will hopefully continue to be confident, passionate gusts of creativity like this one.

The Silent Ballet (Essential Electronica 2008 Selection)

As it is tradition for the mighty Sasu Ripatti to appear on The Silent Ballet end of the year list in at least one of his guises, 2008 saves a place for Luomo, his electro-house project of high repute. While vastly different from his more experimental and minimal projects, everything that epitomizes Ripatti's work is still on show, especially the craft of melody and near perfect production. For those who like their beats hypnotic, vocals deep, production crisp, and melodies infectious, Convivial is definitely the right choice.

The Silent Ballet Review

Is movement a communal concept, in need of a sender and a receiver? It could be said that space is determined by the presence of others; when we race through the streets, pressing our car into max velocity, we're conscious that we're only able to do it because there are no other cars in front, no passers-by crossing the road, no possibility of violent interactions in the immediacy of our space. Once another vehicle enters our field of vision, we become cautious, we begin to slow down

and make all manners of calculations to let the other enter said space. There is, of course, the danger of conceiving the other as just another, but emerging, part of the street, a mere obstacle, but if we think on it for a bit, we are in practice sharing a space which there never was a 'me' – streets are designed for masses, and we're constantly reminded of our communal status whether we're listening to the radio spurt music and talk shows with the windows down or watching the buildings pass by as they pop up into our field of vision. Movement, in this sense, is Convivial, and what is a more convivial place than a dance party, or whatever type of party it is you're throwing?

A party, a communal space, fills up with individual spaces, the places reserved for people talking, people drinking, people dancing; spaces that constantly morph, mutate, and move, reaching a point in which whatever building is holding the party is replaceable: the party can always move outside, into the street, into another building, and so on. It is, in short, a space made out of the interactions of persons, always changing, always moving, just like music, just like conversations. In this regard, "Have You Ever" is that question one asks when establishing intimacy, confidence, a question that arises not at the beginning of a conversation but at the very middle; as a piece of space, the music is steady, its beats regular, and once we're past the first few minutes we're lost in its intricacy, lost in the dialogue we've come to construct with it (and beyond it). This dialogue is made up of gestures, facial expressions, in other words, movement and words deeply intertwined. The album needed no introduction, no first words: we've been directly thrown into the movement of life, of dialogue, as understood through music. Dance music, that style defined by what movies have many times stereotyped as an element of orgiastic excess, a music that overpowers everything in favor of pure movement. Which is, in turn, pure dialogue, a form of communication ideally devoid of all the problems of interpretation more characteristic of spoken language (it's now commonplace to think that "body language" reveals a truth its spoken counterpart generally covers up). Within this pure dialogue comes up "Love You All", a slower, more introverted, sincere declaration so often heard in states of mystical or maybe even alcoholic infatuation, nevertheless still positive, still a product of movement.

When devoted to movement (an almost obligated state when in a party, in this form of space), one is freed from the constriction of not being able to move however we like while in other public spaces not defined by our communion: unless every passenger in the subway is motivated by our dancing, we'll inevitably be singled out and looked upon in many a funny manner. This freedom has a strangely elegant aura of utopia in which all lines are blurred, all horizons made familiar, all voices deposed of sex – Jake Shears (from the famous Scissor Sisters) sings in ambiguous tones: that loss of difference we experience while communicating and interacting through movement. To lose ourselves and our differences in this conviviality, we need to be in perpetual motion, otherwise, "nothing goes away / no matter how long I stay", as the fourth track makes explicit. Being unmovable is equivalent to silence of the bad kind, that silence that leaves no room for interpretation and is, actually, cutting us out of the dialogue. Being unmovable is equivalent to not thinking of the other, being immersed in one's self and shunning the whole world. In other words, it's akin to death, it's akin to destroying the utopia of the dance floor, in which all individual spaces merge and move and agitate as equals without restrictions of age, sex, orientation, profession, or whatever. This is "Robert's Reason": a sturdy method of understanding the world around us as a result of moving and being moved, of dancing with and being danced with. It's a world where silence exists only as a motive for more sounds, and just like when we drive at high speeds through the street because we know there's no one else, we're only silent because we know there's someone to talk to.

"Sleep Tonight" is made of dreamful sequences and complex beats that, as all beats do, mimic our heartbeat, provoking motion that feels naturally connected to everything else; music becomes a system in which everything's related and we start feeling the movement of the world within us. Because even as we sleep, even as we seem to be lost within ourselves, the universe remains in an eternal motion that affects us and involves us, from the light of the stars to our R.E.M. phase, from the dust particles floating in the air to the orbit of galaxies. The party's kind of big, for the conviviality in movement is practically universal. And Uomo, very much on our behalf, comes to see he "Gets Along Fine".

As a closer we have "Lonely Music Co.", a slower, dub-inspired vision in which, like the name states, a company has dedicated itself to creating lonely music, music that stands for itself, with not many people to hear it but themselves (if even, since they might not have been attendants), because the party has moved on, its space dissolved into many others as people go back to the places from where they first started moving. Our utopia comes to completion: it does not exist. Or, at least, it exists only in the instants in which we share the rhythms of the dance floor... needless to say, everyone, absolutely everyone, is cordially invited.

Playground Magazine Review

Sería fácil hablar este disco si no viniese de la mano de Sasu Ripatti (aka Luomo), un músico hiperactivo (batería de jazz y artista electrónico) cuyo abrazo es tan amplio como para recoger los sonidos que provienen de sus otros alias Vladislav Delay y Uusitalo (entre otros). Sería fácil si nunca hubiesen existido los precedentes de "The Present Lover", el disco del amor del verano del 2003, y del seminal "Vocalcity", esos dos discos que lo catapultaron a la portada de las revistas indies. Su música parece no encontrar espacio hoy día entre los hypes del momento, incluso parece haber llegado a un sitio de no retorno. Demasiado soft a veces, no hay canción que actualmente se pueda convertir en un hit (que tan poco es un problema, aclaremos). El de Luomo es un tratado de pop-house tan frágil que podría llegar a romperse. Es por ello que quizás proyectos como el de Uusitalo, más dub y techno, puedan recoger el testigo de Luomo hoy día. A pesar de tener canciones tan redondas y pegadizas en este "Convivial" como la que interpreta Cassy, la popular residente de Berghain - Panorama (Berlín). Una canción más contundente que el resto, que rescata su legado y lo hace avanzar hacia espacios no visitados. Para evitar la repetición de sus anteriores discos (y el pequeño bache que —para algunos— supuso "Paper Tigers") Luomo ha aprendido la lección y se ha rodeado de lo mejor del indie electrónico: a la ya comentada Cassy, hay que añadir la voz de Sascha Ring (Apparat), que borda las letras de "Love You All", una balada cálida y corpórea que conecta fielmente con el reciente "Walls" del mismo Apparat. Otro de los temas del disco es el que interpreta Chubbs -artista anónimo enmascarado bajo este raro sobrenombre—"Get Along Fine", más soul incluso que la interpretada por Robert Owens. A sus ya habituales colaboraciones con la finlandesa Johanna Iivanainen, habría que destacar la colaboración de Jake Shears de Scissor Sisters (¿?). Quizás sea un intento de llegar a otros públicos, pero siendo realistas, ¿quién escucha house hoy día?

We'll show them... Blog Review

"Convivial" e Luomo. Quarto album per una delle tante vesti di Sasu Ripatti (più conosciuto appunto come Vladislav Delay), che vede la partecipazione di molteplici esponenti del panorama elettronico e non: Sascha Ring in arte Apparat, Johanna Iivanainen, ma anche Cassy dei Panorama Bar e Jake Shears dei Scissor Sisters. 9 brani che spaziano continuamente, saltando da influenze soul lounge dettate da timbri enfatici e focosi, a contaminazioni esoteriche dream pop/newgaze (senti "Love You All" con protagonista proprio Apparat) alternate a scoordinamenti e sincopismi house e ammiccamenti pop (lampante "If I Can't" con la maliziosa voce di capo Scissor Sisters). La techno raggiunge il suo confine massimo, costellata da squilli polivalenti, subisce una trasformazione in diverse forme. Sperimentalismo dalla forte componente dub, la quale conferisce dinamismo e portata ad ogni traccia e di conseguenza alla totale scorrevolezza del disco, che si rivela decisamente più adatto all'ascolto o a un'afoso inizio serata estivo tra palme, cocktails e belle ragazze.

The Boston Phoenix Review

Known also for his more ambient work as Vladislav Delay, Luomo is the house-music moniker of Finnish producer Sasu Ripatti. And though Convivial purports to be a dance record, Luomo's real skills are in bringing pop melodies and structures to house music without, like LCD Soundsystem, turning them into pop songs with electronic drums and synth sweeps. Convivial still flows like German dance music — it progresses by the addition of rhythmic layers rather than through the hard chord changes of pop music. "Sleep Tonight" begins with oddly pitched metallic sounds that form a random rhythmic framework under which Luomo slips the usual 4/4 bass drum beat. Then

one of his vocal collaborators, Johanna Iivanainen, appears to play the house diva, singing, "Can I get to sleep tonight?", only to have her repetitions devolve into computerized noise.

Audiotart Review

When they declared Dance music dead a few years back I knew it was only a matter of time before this sort of album emerged. Convivial sounds like the first tentative, blinking advances back into the blazing sunshine of Pop music after several years of Electronic music's much needed retreat into the dark recesses of the underground. I know Sasu Ripatti (the man behind Luomo) better under another alias – styling himself as Vladislav Delay he creates some stunning but pretty strange ambient soundscapes. Luomo uses the same mastery of deep ambient and incredibly subtle rhythms on Convivial, but by the time he's added House beats and some distinctly Pop vocals on top, it's hard to believe it's the same person behind it.

The album's quality comes from the way in which Ripatti takes quite saccharine vocal contributions from several collaborators and weaves them seamlessly into the production so that they sound like just one amongst his many instruments. It doesn't always work – on 'Slow Dying Places' Johanna Iivanainen's melancholic singing, lovely as it is, feels like it's been pasted on top of the wrong tune. But when it works, it really works. Apparat turns 'Love You All' into a haunting, urgent ballad, his voice mingling perfectly with Luomo's synths. Unsurprisingly, Jake Shears perfectly complements some fairly filthy beats on 'If I Can't.' For me the standout tracks are actually the ones where the vocals are more understated. On 'Lonely Music Co.' Ripatti messes around with Iivanainen's voice almost as much as he messes around with the rhythm. In my opinion the result works better than it does on 'Robert's Reason,' which feels like little more than a backing track for Robert Owens to do his stuff.

But take my opinion with a pinch of salt. I don't really like Pop music and, as weird as it is, Convivial is definitely Pop of some description. Apparently the title of the album refers to a 'convivial vibe' that surrounded each of the collaborations. You can almost imagine Ripatti and the anonymous singer using the alias Chubbs dancing around a studio in Berlin as they create 'Gets Along Fine.' So then, this album might not be pushing musical boundaries as much as Ripatti's work as Vladislav Delay, but if there is any justice it'll bring his rhythmic wizardry to the masses. If you're looking for a way to start exploring Ripatti's catalogue (as you really should be), this is probably the most accessible place to start. And it's a lot of fun.

Coke Machine Glow Review

Does Sasu Ripatti write songs? He writes tracks, certainly. As Vladislav Delay he's crafted intricate, intricate explorations of dub and minimalism. Delay has some real classic pieces to his name, like the klanging rhythmic-shifts of "Huone" or the album-length echo dream bath Anima (2001). As his most prominent persona Luomo, his output is certainly more accessible, and usually accompanied by vocals, and not just hushed echoed phonemes, they're actually singing lyrics. Lyrics pop up at repeated intervals, but there's hardly defined sections of "verse" and "chorus." Rather, we end up with minimally repetitive grooves, tracks with lyrics that you can occasionally sing along to.

In his review of Luomo's last release, 2006's Paper Tigers, Craig Eley argued that it was "not a dance album," referring to Luomo as "post-dance." Of course, rhythmic electronic music not aimed at the dance floor existed before record shops placed it in the "dance" section, and Ripatti's work places him firmly in the lineage of such spacious explorations of dub and experimental music. Convivial, however, is a pop record, and Ripatti has intended it as such.

Let's start with those guest stars. The vocalists on Convivial are hardly the normal fare for Luomo, branching out from old favorite Johanna Iivanainen to include Scissors Sister Jake Shears, house don Robert Owens, glitch-hopper Sue Cie, and Apparat, among others. "If I Can't," featuring Shears, is the closest thing to a pop song that Ripatti has ever been associated with, remixes notwithstanding. Shears' singing is somewhere between reggae DJ toasting, ripe with sing-song repetitions, and the fabulous dance diva persona he's fostered in Scissors Sisters. All the same,

this is still a Luomo track, which means the same chord progressions and microscopic percussive bits and pieces permeate the entire track. Luomo's music progresses linearly; there's never really a return to an earlier part, but layering and metamorphoses that distinguish the end from the beginning. So, after a little bit of a breakdown two thirds of the way through, Shears' vocals are thrown back at us with aggression while the percussion trails off in infinite dub tails.

"If I Can't" is a microcosm of Convivial's whole: we're not listening to music that is "post-dance" so much as music that fits with the lineage of disco, house, and techno, in that it eschews traditional song progression for new forms grounded in repetition, space, and exploration. It's incredible how Ripatti manages to fit such a diverse cast of guest stars in his Luomo formula. Sue Cie spitting slow raps over "Nothing Goes Away" and then dueting with Iivanainen sound difficult on paper, but it's icily funky on record. Once again, it's all about the build—it takes half the track to get to some new synth trills, but what a satisfying payoff it is. Unfortunately, Apparat drops the ball a little on "Love You All," an epic that demands more than his weepily resigned tenor, and serves as a reminder that he's better as an instrumentalist first. Robert Owens, meanwhile, continues to prove that he is incapable of involvement with a bad cut, sweating out creamy phrasings on "Robert's Reason."

The variety provided by the guest collaborations supplies a much needed element of surprise and differentiation that was missing, in stretches, from Paper Tigers. Luomo still seems most comfortable with Iivanainen though, whose vocals are the perfect complement to his productions. Tracks like "Slow Dying Places" and "Sleep Tonight" feature Iivanainen on more relaxed but well-fitting vocal duties; there's no feeling of compromise here, though neither is there a sense that these pieces couldn't have sat easily on Paper Tigers or The Present Lover (2003).

This is a dance record—or at least a record that embodies the physical properties of dance in its lifeblood: the incessant knock of a beat, the elongation of the ecstasy of movement. Convivial is the closest Ripatti has inched toward making something that would fit in with the more outrageous and flamboyantly mainstream house productions that dominate charts and hip clubs these days (check the dance remix of "Love You All" for a case study in this), and at the same time still very heady, engaging music. It's a difficult and rare thing to pull off, but Ripatti does it well, managing to evolve without compromising that cerebral sense of progression on a track that makes him so unique, even among microhouse producers.

Weekly Dig Review

Luomo, the house moniker for experimental Finnish dub producer Sasu Ripatti, will never top 2000's Vocalcity, which blasted dance music far into the future. Like Slanted and Enchanted or Is This It, its timelessness cannot be reproduced. Convivial is excellent in parts though, like cameos from Scissor Sister Jake Shears and the silky bounce of "Have You Ever" featuring vocals from Berlin's DJ Cassy. He may never top Vocalcity, but he better not stop trying.

Dusted Magazine Review

While it met the collective cold shoulder of 'inflated online music critic expectations' when released in 2006, I quite enjoyed Luomo's third album, Paper Tigers. It may not have reached the heights of its predecessors, 2000's Vocalcity and 2003's The Present Lover, but "Good To Be With," "Really Don't Mind" and "Wanna Tell" were all sumptuous, and lyrically, Finnish producer Sasu Ripatti had made some significant strides. The lover's lament of "Wanna Tell" perfected the game of emotional tag he had been playing across these records, where the tics of interpersonal, romantic anxiety manifest through lyric, delivery and production.

But it's true that Paper Tigers didn't make the aesthetic leaps of other Luomo records, on which Ripatti co-parented microhouse (Vocalcity) before gesturing toward hyper-modern pop on the sleek, stainless-steel surfaces of The Present Lover. Convivial, if anything, is an extension and intensification of the latter album, albeit with significantly streamlined production. If you're looking for the vocal science that characterized Ripatti's earlier output, Convivial might be a

disappointment: it's there, but it's often submerged, made to service each song's overarching structure. The rhythms are bold and almost brash, the bass squirms and worms its way through and across the beats, and the synth textures and melodies are razor-sharp, livid, and precision tooled – stealthy.

This new turn reaches its peak on penultimate track "Gets Along Fine," where snares slap against your skull while whistling melodies weave their way around vocalist Chubbs's dejected devotional. But most of Convivial works to a similar level. "If I Can't" features Scissor Sister Jake Shears ghosting himself in falsetto, while Ripatti drops pensive chords into a dub-wise Echoplex; the piston-pulse bass drum that punctuates the verse, just before the chorus, is heart-stopping. "Love You All" pivots on a juddering bass pattern that's equal parts Mororder and '80s electronic pop, coasted by Apparat alias Sascha Ring's most wistful, woozy vocal delivery yet. "Sleep Tonight," one of four tracks featuring long-time Luomo vocalist Johanna Iivanainen, is yet another highlight – skipping along on a bubble-pack rhythm, here Iivanainen's voice is repeatedly swarmed by twisting, amorphous peals of electronics. It's the most playful I've heard Ripatti: "Sleep Tonight" sounds almost giddy with its own pleasure.

Not everything's perfect on Convivial. The lyrics on "Slow Dying Places" are pretty ordinary, Sue Cie's rap on "Nothing Goes Away" is faintly embarrassing, and Robert Owens is underused on "Robert's Reason." With a voice as singular as Owens, I was hoping for a full-blown house spiritual, something to shake the walls. Instead, Owens suffers slightly for his subjection to Ripatti's will: it's one of the few examples where you wish Ripatti had taken things further, really pushed the boat out. And the closing "Lonely Music Co.," while lovely, feels slight. Ripatti could have done more with this, bringing Convivial to an end with a gracious flourish.

It'd be hard to be disappointed with Convivial, however. It's not necessarily an immediate listen; it took a few spins before the leaps Ripatti has made started seriously to sink in. But it's the strongest thing he's done, either as Luomo or under his Uusitalo or Vladislav Delay guises, since *The Present Lover*, and its sharpening of focus suggests Ripatti has yet more work to do under this guise, heading further down the pop(ulist) path Luomo's currently navigating.

Allmusic Magazine Review

Just before entering a seemingly inescapable cul-de-sac after 2006's *Paper Tigers*, Sasu Ripatti evades it by throwing Luomo into reverse. Convivial, however, is not quite a revisit of *Vocal City* or *The Present Lover*, two of the most seismic house albums released during the decade. It's the most song-oriented Luomo album, with the lyrical and vocal contributions expanded from *Paper Tigers'* featured voice, Johanna Iivanainen, to include fellow Europeans Cassy, Sascha Ring, Sue Cie, and an "anonymous" gent named Chubbs, as well as Americans Robert Owens and Scissor Sister Jake Shears. While this varied mix of voices suggests diffuse results, the two least likely collaborators -- Shears and Owens -- are kept, respectively, to tongue-twisting whispers and a series of low-key cut-ups. For its lack of rush-inducing highs and novel sounds, the album is immensely pleasurable, with fleet keyboard vamps and percussive effects that stab and flick ricocheting off pliant, bounding basslines. The only slip is "Nothing Goes Away," damp and squishy 21st century Euro-hip-house that wouldn't stimulate much more in instrumental form.

URB Magazine Review

In the club, everything glows black-light purple and the many bobbing faces are frozen with pursed lips. The international DJ of the week with an unpronounceable name has his bag of tricks and he just might, at any minute, pull out a platter that's a veritable arsenal of anthemic vocals and riffs. In fact, he might pull out Convivial.

But Luomo's fourth album cuts techno 101 cheesecake into nine palpable slices, thematically reaching real depths through shallow waters and abstractions thereof. "Slow Dying Places," for example, regards experiential despair: "So hard to be alone/So hardcore." The song then answers those fearsome feelings with, "All is not black/Maybe it's sad," repeated enough times that the

listener begins believing the sun will shine again, summoned by Johanna Iivanainen, whose accented gentility peppers the album. "Have you Ever?" conjures eternity broken down into simple terms: "Have you ever had the time to wonder?" which is broken further into a million echoing pieces. "If I Can't," featuring Jake Shears of Scissors Sisters, is flowery in both the perfumed and sexual senses of the term—think bees spreading flower semen around the world. "Love You All" would be the *raison d'être* for an apiary gang, their love song, dropping lines like, "What if I want to love you all?/Don't want to waste your beauty, aw." With every track clocking in at about seven minutes, *Convivial* may fulfill not only the needs of the insatiable dancefloor, but the wants of those looking for relief of daily life's mundanities.

Pitchfork Magazine Review

After 2006's disappointing *Paper Tigers*, I had wondered if Finland's Sasu Ripatti might quietly abandon *Luomo*, his moniker for a seductive, dub-laced brand of vocal house that resulted in two of this decade's most gorgeous albums, *Vocalcity* and *The Present Lover*. After all, Ripatti had a strong 2007 with excellent releases as Uusitalo (propulsive tech-house) and Vladislav Delay (swirling fractal dub). By comparison, it appeared that Ripatti had exhausted the possibilities inherent to the *Luomo* project, and that every new release was doomed to intensify a sense of diminishing returns.

In retrospect, *Paper Tigers* sounds better than I remember: a stately, hypnotic collection featuring some of Ripatti's most refined house productions. But it exists almost entirely within the shadow of the first two *Luomo* albums, inviting the warmth of recognition rather than the flushes and chills of surprised fascination. Ripatti's work as Vladislav Delay hardly shocks these days either, but there's a sense with *Luomo* that the stakes are higher. Standing still is anathema to the *Luomo* aesthetic, the value of which resides not merely in the bewitching, spangly depths of Ripatti's arrangements, but also in the vague sense that, at his best, he forges new emotional as well as sonic territory, marshalling enormous amounts of studio wizardry and compositional effort to map out a new (effortless-sounding) textural and sensual approach to house music.

So it's with a sense of relief bordering on exhilaration that I come to the fourth *Luomo* album to discover a substantial rewiring of this particular aesthetic. While retaining the voluptuous shimmer characteristic of all Ripatti's work as *Luomo*, this album distances itself from the stutters and glitches he previously used to imply conflict and self-contradiction (puncturing house's habitual self-assurance). Instead, *Convivial* parades an immaculately structured, insectile busyness: clean and clearly etched, each sound placed with infinite care and burnished to a hyperreal sheen. If *Vocalcity* was murky and enveloping and *The Present Lover* gaseous and giddy, then *Convivial* is more like the rush of pure oxygen, offering a sound that is so sharp and so vivid it sears as much as it energizes.

It's also Ripatti's most unabashed foray into "pop" territory. Where previously the producer mostly oscillated between simple refrains and rigorously fractured vocal cut-ups (occasionally leaving his anonymous divas to wander in a confusing hall of mirrors), *Convivial* ushers in an array of guest vocalists whose contributions resemble (to a greater or lesser extent) "proper songs," filled with the coherent emotional arcs of complete verses and choruses.

"Love You All", a brooding gothic electro-ballad somewhere between the first Junior Boys album and Depeche Mode's *Violator*, forms a far outpost into this unfamiliar territory, its stuttering groove, morose strings, and eerie arpeggios creating a dense, almost claustrophobic topographic framework for Sascha Ring (Apparat)'s languid-but-tense verses and overblown falsetto choruses. It's a world away from the open-ended, near-formless echo-chambers of *Vocalcity*, or even the expansive curving surfaces of *The Present Lover*; compared to those albums, its exacting subordination of sonics to songfulness seems almost totalitarian.

But it's precisely this sense of discipline that makes "Love You All" (together with *Convivial*'s other highlights) so marvelous: The pressure that these full-blown song structures exert upon Ripatti's sonic largess creates an unbearable sense of momentum that makes the best tracks here almost

explosive with a joyful sense of possibility. You can almost hear the delight with which Ripatti puzzles out how to imbue the transitions from verses to choruses on "Love You All" with the kind of anthemic surge that pop masters take for granted. And it is from within this process of symbiotic adaptation-- the careful entwining of the producer's trembling sounds along the snaking contours of songcraft-- that the hoped-for sense of emotional breakthrough emerges.

The (relatively) weaker moments on *Convivial* are those which could most easily be mistaken for a reiteration the sound of the previous *Luomo* albums: On the understated chug of "If I Can't", (Scissor Sister) Jake Shears' bittersweet multi-tracked sighs mirror a little too closely the conflicted, stuttering divas of old, a resemblance Ripatti underlines by providing some of his most archetypal bruised, woozy synth chords. But even here, there's a sense of economy and structure that lifts the song above its immediate forbears, with every synth quiver and scraping dub echo carefully sustaining the ambiguous development of Shears' performance.

But while it's pleasing to see Ripatti further hone his familiar sound, I can't help but prefer the alchemy of the new: The best moments on *Convivial* transpose that unmistakable air of aching longing onto a broader, less predictable sonic palette. "Gets Along Fine" might ride a familiar wistful bass riff, but the core of its appeal resides in the astonishing combination of bleeping synthesizer and pseudo-African percussion in its chorus, which makes it simultaneously the most aggressive and purely joyous *Luomo* production to date, the muscular assault of its universalist affection like an embrace so fierce it crushes. The marvel, and perhaps the necessity of the *Luomo* project, is bound up in the shock of physical intimacy; pleasurable, overwhelming, and at times a little scary. "Am I really feeling this?" "Is it you who is making me feel this way?" Yes, and yes.

The Phoenix Review

Known also for his more ambient work as Vladislav Delay, *Luomo* is the house-music moniker of Finnish producer Sasu Ripatti. And though *Convivial* purports to be a dance record, *Luomo*'s real skills are in bringing pop melodies and structures to house music without, like LCD Soundsystem, turning them into pop songs with electronic drums and synth sweeps. *Convivial* still flows like German dance music — it progresses by the addition of rhythmic layers rather than through the hard chord changes of pop music. "Sleep Tonight" begins with oddly pitched metallic sounds that form a random rhythmic framework under which *Luomo* slips the usual 4/4 bass drum beat. Then one of his vocal collaborators, Johanna Iivanainen, appears to play the house diva, singing, "Can I get to sleep tonight?", only to have her repetitions devolve into computerized noise.

Fact Magazine Review

Finnish electronic producer Sasu Ripatti is probably best known for teasing out experimental dubscaapes as Vladislav Delay. It's as *Luomo* however, that he indulges his less abstract tastes — and *Convivial* is his most accessible work yet. Subtle snatches of sound may have been key to the clicks and cuts of debut album *Vocalcity*, but now it's Scissor Sister Jake Shears' falsetto riding the pop minimal of 'If I Can't' in stereo clarity. 'Love You All' spends seven sublime minutes pitting IDM against the cheesier conventions of trance, with respected producer Apparat cast as the lovelorn European singing about beauty over minor chord progressions and ascending strings.

But these broad, emotive strokes are an illusion — *Luomo*'s obsession with sound design on a micro level is still at the heart of this record. 'Sleep Tonight' begins innocuously but builds to feverish levels as eczema-dry snare, metallic pings and distorted vocals envelop the listener in a claustrophobic bastardisation of deep house's tactility. 'Robert's Reason' sees *Luomo* pairing his old tricks — chopped vocal percussion, ratchet clicks - with a vigorous, bouncing bassline straight off a Made to Play record. This is microhouse on a massive scale.

Boomkat Review

Marking a return to his House persona *Luomo*, Vladislav Delay's Sasu Ripatti follows up on 2003's *The Present Lover* with another glorious full-length brimming with state of the art 4/4 productions.

While *Convivial* makes quite an impact as a technical achievement (the production is consistently a delight to the ears) this is an album with a lot of heart too. That's partially creditable to the roster of guest vocalists who bring a little humanity to the steely perfection of Ripatti's artificial intelligence: we already know about the Apparat-fronted future disco of 'Love You All', the first single to be lifted from the album, but there are vital contributions made elsewhere by the likes of Cassy Britton, Sue-C and even Jake Shears of the Scissor Sisters, who delivers an uncharacteristically sober performance on the soulful melancholy of 'If I Can't'. Johanna Iivanainen crops up at several points across *Convivial*, and it's arguably her vocal that integrates most seamlessly into the frosty digital sound world, becoming just another instrument in the mix on 'Slow Dying Places' and 'Sleep Tonight'. Regardless of what moniker he uses or what genre he chooses to inhabit, Ripatti is one of those rare electronic musicians to have devised a sonic idiom that's all his own, and *Convivial* is a virtuoso piece in this respect: in addition to the obvious technical flair behind all this, like an Autechre or a Fennesz there's such a distinct and unique character embedded within Luomo's circuitry, and it fills every bar of these long, winding narratives. Excellent.

The Milk Factory Review

Alongside running his own label, Huume Recordings, and crafting some of the finest minimal textural electronic music around as Vladislav Delay, Berlin-based Finnish musician Sasu Ripatti has also been busy on countless other fronts over the years, from the club-orientated Uusitalo and collaborations with the likes of AGF and Craig Armstrong (The Dolls) or with Mika Vainio, Derek Shirley and Lucio Capece as Vladislav Delay Quartet. As Luomo, his focus is on space-age pop/dance music infused with razor-sharp grooves and wonderfully warm melodies. The resulting disco-tech was first showcased on the album *Vocalcity* in 2000, which featured six minimal epic pieces, all clocking at around ten minutes or more and appear to combine the edgy touches of underground dance music and the density of his Vladislav Delay records. Subsequent releases refined this original template, bringing the songs back to more common time frames and softening the stark techno grooves a tad. On *The Present Lover*, released in 2003, and *Paper Tigers* (2006), Ripatti opted for a more atmospheric sound which, while still relying on club forms, presented a more subtle angle, at times close to his work as Vladislav Delay.

With his latest delivery, Ripatti has teamed up with a wide array of vocalists, both known (Jake Shears, of New York's über-kitsch fluffy disco crew Scissor Sisters, Sascha Ring, of Apparat fame, Robert Owens) and less known (Helsinki-based Johanna Iivanainen, audio visual artist and occasional AGF collaborator Sue-C and anonymous singer Chubbs). *Convivial*, referring to the vibe that reigned during the recording sessions, is a warm, elegant and inviting record, scintillating with exquisite melodies, warm soundscapes and vibrant beats. There is nothing quite as epic as *Vocalcity*, but the compositions have certainly regained some of the stamina that fuelled that album. Here though, Ripatti adopts a much poppier tone. But this is futuristic pop music with a clean cut dance edge. Songs like the wonderful opening piece, *Have You Ever*, or the uplifting and slightly haunting *Love You All* give an idea of the dimension in which Ripatti and his collaborators (here Cassy and Sascha Ring respectively) evolve. Each piece reaches well over the seven minute mark and balances vocal moments and instrumental sequences throughout. *Nothing Goes Away*, one of the four songs to feature Johanna Iivanainen on vocals, although here, Sue-C takes the lead, is a slightly sharper piece, with minimal electro strikes curved to sound like strangely linear dubstep, while *Sleeps Tonight* is given a funkier, if somewhat limited, vocal twist, Iivanainen operating alone.

The rather excellent *If You Can't*, featuring Jake Shears, and *Gets Along Fine*, give this album its most infectious disco moment, but the melancholic *Slow Dying Places* is a more reflective piece, even as it progresses into a heavy electronic machinery, and takes *Convivial* into almost ethereal ground before turning more robotic toward the end. The album concludes with the somewhat peaceful and blessed-out stretches of *Lonely Music Co.*, once again featuring Johanna Iivanainen on vocal duties.

With every Luomo album, Sasu Ripatti has brought something new to his template and pushed his music into surprising corners. *Convivial* is a truly enchanting record from start to finish, and one

that keeps on growing and getting catchier with each listen. If charts were filled with cutting-edge pop music instead of run of the mill mono-dimensional wallpaper drool, Uomo would be leading the way.

Resident Adviser Review

There's no point in expecting Sasu Ripatti to knock us back the way he did in 2000. A rupture like that comes once in a lifetime if you're lucky, and eight years ago Ripatti was lucky as they come. Hearing *Vocalcity*—the debut of Ripatti's house moniker, Uomo—for the first time was a "Eureka!" moment: a merger of deep house's emotional fervor with Clicks+_Cuts-style methodology. It was an audacious mingling, sounding and feeling wholly European while unmistakably soaked in Jamaican dub and American house. It wasn't unprecedented by any means. But it was so striking and fully formed that it felt like a call to community, and an effective one: a lot of people have found each other through that record.

Ripatti, though, was never satisfied with *Vocalcity*, and three years later unveiled (after many delays) *The Present Lover*, an album so heavily lacquered it made the debut's luster seem modest in comparison. Sometimes this just made things sound like exceptionally frosty darkwave interludes, but it also drove the album's best moments into the sky: the heart-grabbing opening of "So You," the sudden, senses-freezing key change of "What Good," the squinching guitars and head-in-the-clouds male vocal of "The Present Lover," all grounded by basslines as sturdy as oaks. But it wasn't hard to hear inspiration turning to formula on *The Present Lover*, and by the time of 2006's *Paper Tigers*, the project's idea power seemed all but jettisoned. Everything sounded like cardboard, including the emotions.

The major carryover from *Paper Tigers* to *Convivial* is the overall sound. Where the first two had dublike dimension to them, *Paper Tigers* sounded thin and flat, occasionally in an appealingly flexible way, but mostly in a fashion that sucked the mystery out of the mix. All those cut-up phrases by various singers that Ripatti tosses around lost their air of the uncanny; now they were more like jingles. What changes on *Convivial* is that Ripatti sounds surer of himself: instead of relying on stereo space and mixing effects to work his magic, he's relying more on tweaking the groove, on the way his various synth parts underline and move about the rhythms. That's a classic rock band move (think Talking Heads' *Remain in Light*), but developing sound-in-itself is as much the task for techno as the beats are, and it's easy to see *Convivial* as a dividing line: rock fans may end up liking it more than techno fans.

That isn't to say Ripatti hasn't made a dance record. The question may be which kind. *Convivial* seems aimed as much toward a pop audience as was *The Present Lover*, and in a way you can hear this album as that one's analogue: a celebration of accessibility whose tracks start simple and then build on themselves. Take "If I Can't," which features Jake Shears of the Scissor Sisters. It's a clear bid for play in more mainstream and gay clubs where Uomo might not have a following; it isn't quite structured like a pop song but it feels like one anyway. It's almost too sleek for its own good: synths fizzle in spurts like bottle rockets as Shears croons a readymade sing-along ("I don't wanna be, I don't wanna be") that evokes, along with its sprightly track, mid-'80s Prince. (It also made an RA colleague pucker violently.)

But while Uomo albums have always been built on lengthy instrumental stretches, there are some here, such as "Nothing Goes Away" (with Johanna Iivanainen, who with four tracks is the album's vocal workhorse, and Sue Cie), where the synths blat around and the beat shuffles on and the singing comes in Rorschach blots and you just start to wonder why he keeps going, you know? What more is there to prove in this format? The first couple times it felt momentous, even if we were kidding ourselves a little (and we probably were, but only a little). Now it feels like a kind of party trick, and while it isn't a bad one it's become harder to know how to regard it.

The Guardian Review

Finnish microhouse pioneer Sasu Ripatti has assembled an array of disparate singers on his fourth

album as Uomo, his pop-house alias - and the result is a superbly realised work, easily the equal of his 2003 masterpiece *The Present Lover*. Vocals range from Cassy's smoky, sultry depths to Jake Shears' disembodied sleaze and Sue C's laconic, Tom Tom Club-esque rapping; Ripatti responds by swathing them in intricate cocoons of sound. Wintry synths, clicking rhythms and detailed counterpoint melodies prevail, underpinned by a steady house pulse. Consequently, *Convivial* is an astonishingly intimate listen, similar in feel to Junior Boys' *Last Exit* or Björk's *Vespertine*. Its highest point comes on the impossibly romantic *Love You All*, on which Apparat swoons and sighs over imperious synth hits and sumptuous strings. Though each of *Convivial*'s nine tracks unfolds gradually - only one clocks in at under six minutes - not one moment is wasted.

Ear/Rational Music Blog Review

More than anything, his Kafka-esque productions come with a wonderful petulance that bring more depth and meaning to dance music in the bigger picture. The Uomo project is nothing less than a great tragedian, holding a mirror before a music society that sometimes would like to hear less stories. Nevertheless, he finds the dance music medium most suitable for his pop explorations, which has earned marked respect for its wide-ranging catalog of unique no-frills releases, with *Convivial* certainly being no exception.

Chilloutime Blog Review

Sasu Ripatti is the producer and head writer behind the project Uomo, his musical outfit that has redrawn the very boundaries of what "house music" can achieve. "*Convivial*"; is Ripatti's fourth, album as Uomo. For his relief though, this time he doesn't have to arrive alone. In addition to a long-time collaborator Johanna Iivanainen (From Helsinki, Finland), this time he lands with a semi-underground star cast; Cassy (Panorama Bar), Sascha Ring (Apparat), Jake Shears (Scissor Sisters), Robert Owens, Sue-C and one anonymous singer who hides behind a name Chubbs

The network of artists and singers he worked with for the album bring about strong song characteristics and wide range of electronic music to experience. Cassy is participating on a dancefloor-friendly song "Have You Ever", while Sascha Ring makes a touching appearance singing a semi-ballad "Love You All". Jake Shears does add a piece of glamour in "If I Can't" while a long-time friend from California, Sue-C does great lead vocals in "Nothing Goes Away", a song probably everyone can relate to. Classic house vocalist Robert Owens gets treated and processed in soulful "Robert's Reason", while Johanna Iivanainen both brings back and takes further than before what vocals can do in experimental pop music. As always in his productions the vocals rarely speak out on narrow or specific issues, preferring sweeping hyperbolic statements all about seasonless emotions and about transition and exchange, because that is what people have in their lives, and it is his wish to reflect on that in his music.

Star Eating Sun Blog Review

Uomo will be putting out a new album called *Convivial*. Samples are up on his website, and they sound quite good. This seems to be a departure from the style of *Paper Tigers* and *The Present Lover* into even more accessible territory. I mean, there's even a list of "featuring" artists, including a few big names like Apparat and Robert Owens. That sort of thing usually doesn't fly with me, but if there's one guy to pull it off it's Ripatti.

Underground Sound Blog Review

Quarta opera firmata Uomo, in uscita su Huume il 24 Ottobre. Quarta ma prima di cui si avvale della collaborazione di altri artisti, disco in cui la copertina ed il titolo riflettono in modo essenziale l'atmosfera che si è creata durante la lavorazione dell'album. Oggi, per la prima volta nella sua carriera, Uomo ha scelto di dare spazio alla creatività di ogni artista coinvolto anche nella scrittura e nella produzione dei pezzi, esulandoli dal solo ruolo di voce narrante. Nasce così "*Convivial*": emblema elettronico che strizza l'occhio al pop in cui figurano, oltre alla collaboratrice di lunga data Johanna Iivanainen, artisti della scena underground come Sascha Ring conosciuto ai più come

Apparat, Robert Owens, Sue-C, Cassy dei Panorama Bar, Robert Owens e la star internazionale del glam pop per antonomasia Jake Shears dei Scissor Sisters. Si grida già al capolavoro, ascoltando "Convivial" non viene difficile da pensarlo. O quantomeno pensare che sia indubbiamente uno degli album più belli usciti quest'anno e che finirà tra i nominati per il titolo de "Album of the Year".

Electronic Beats Blog Review

Sasu Ripatti aka Uomo steht kurz vor der Veröffentlichung seines vierten Albums "Convivial". Nach seinem letzten Werk "Karhunainen" unter dem Pseudonym Uusitalo, dass ich bewußt auf funktionale und analog produzierte Tanzmusik zwischen House und Techno positionierte, kehrt der Mann aus Finnland zurück zu seiner Idee von House; gar nicht mal so losgelöst von seinem wunderbaren Uomo-Debütalbum "Vocalcity". Die Grundlage des Albums steht im Albumtitel geschrieben: dem Wörterbuch entnommen, steht "Convivial" für heiter und unbeschwert, zugleich gesellig. Jedes der neun Stücke ist in unbeschwerter und geselliger Kollaboration mit einem Sänger/in entstanden. Ripatti hat dabei nicht allein die lyrics geschrieben, sondern vielmehr seinen Kollaborateuren Raum gelassen Songtexte zu schreiben, zugleich musikalische Ideen einfließen zu lassen. Im Endergebnis, von meinem ersten Eindruck ausgehend, muss ich sagen, dass sich jene konviviale Atmosphäre sowohl in Track- als auch Songstruktur manifestiert. Wer überhaupt singt zu Luomos handwerklich präzisen und gleichzeitig natürlich fließenden Tracks? Ein absolut sehens- und natürlich hörenswertes Line-Up: Robert Owens, Cassy, Sascha Ring aka Apparat, Jake Shears (Scissor Sisters), Johanna Iivanainen, Sue Cie und ein gewisser Chubbs. Im besonderen Maße hervorstechend ist nicht zuletzt der ausgeprägte (Synth-)Pop in Luomos Musik. Mit Pop hat er als Uomo schon immer irgendwie geliebäugelt und experimentiert. Auf "Convivial" wirkt das Experiment nun am ausgegorensten und fortgeschrittensten; ein ausgewogenes House-Pop-Hybrid, das jenseits von Form und Inhalt, vor allem einen populäreren Geschmack treffen wird. Und daran ist nichts auszusetzen! Wenn Pop, dann bitte schön in dieser Form und mit folgender Einstellung: "With 'Convivial' [Uomo] wanted let go off the structures and rules, as well as the pressures and aims as to what one should create and instead just took a moment to enjoy making the kind of music he felt strongly about. Often together with other people." (Kurz: Frei von Regeln und erdrückenden Erwartungen, hat sich Uomo entschlossen Musik zu machen, die ihm am Herzen liegt.) Bleibt die Frage, was als nächstes folgen wird...

Intro Magazine Review

Uomo ist ein überaus wandelbarer Mann. Sein Schöpfer Sasu Ripatti, besser bekannt unter seinem anderen Decknamen Vladislav Delay, ließ ihn aus dem Nichts Emo-Dub-House mit verschleppten, tonnenschweren Beats erfinden, als der Rest der Laptop-Welt noch am Zerbröseln der letzten Clicks feilte.

Er setzte auf die Kühle und den Futurismus von R'n'B-Design, als man sich in den Clubs wieder für die Gefühllichkeit von Disco zu interessieren begann. Ripatti war mit seinem Projekt meist Avantgarde, machte sich damit aber nicht nur Freunde. Trotzdem, eines blieb als Konstante: die spezielle Art und Weise, mit der Uomo der elektronischen Musik bisher nicht gehörte Song- und Kitschdimensionen eröffnete. Man durfte Future-Pop dazu sagen. Weswegen es ein wenig überrascht, wenn Uomo diesen Pop auf seinem vierten Album nun eher in klassischer 80er-Jahre-Tradition buchstabiert.

Es gibt Anleihen an frühe House Music (vor allem wegen der Stimme von Robert Owens, aber auch der von Cassy auf je einem Stück), Rapeinlagen von Sängerin Sue Cie und viel tanzbaren Synthie-Pop. Speziell Sascha Ring a.k.a. Apparat zeigt als Gast auf "Love You All", dass an seiner Stimme ein kleiner Electro-Chris-Isaak verloren gegangen ist. So gelungen gerade dieser Song ist, die geschlossene Stimmung eines Albums wie "Vocal City" kriegt Uomo mit diesem Retro-Nuevo-Flickenteppich des House nicht mehr hin. Womit er nur wieder bestens ins aktuelle Musikzeitalter passt, in dem das Format "Album" zerbröseln wie einst die Clicks.

Laut.de Review

Die vergangenen beiden Jahre war es um den finnischen Produzenten Sasu Ripatti alias Uomo erschreckend ruhig. Der gewohnt beständige Strom an Releases aus seinem Studio war plötzlich versiegt. Nun, da "Convivial" vorliegt, könnte man vermuten, dass Ripatti viel kommunizieren musste, denn - Überraschung - zu allen neun Stücken gibts diesmal Gesangskollaborationen. Bislang ergänzte Uomo sein elektronisches Equipment lediglich sporadisch um natürliche Instrumente, wie beispielsweise auf seinem 2006er Album "Paper Tigers". Der Schritt, den er jetzt mit "Convivial" geht, ist dagegen weit radikaler. Insgesamt acht unterschiedliche Sängerinnen und Sänger leihen den Stücken ihre Stimme, darunter unter anderem Sascha Ring alias Apparat, Chicago-Legende Robert Owens und die Berliner House-DJane Cassy.

Den Popappeal des Longplayers verstärkt dies nur wenig. Die bewusst leicht schräge Melodieführung sorgt jedoch dafür, dass der Charakter von "Convivial" einen futuristischen Anstrich erhält. "Love You All" mit Sascha Ring am Mikrofon ist ein gutes Beispiel für die kühle Distanz, mit der die Tracks von Uomo den Hörern immer wieder begegnen, ganz so als wollten sie sich nur äußerst ungern vereinnahmen lassen. Seine zugängliche Seite zeigt Uomo auf "Convivial" aber ebenfalls. "If I Can't" schwört auf ein plastisches Popverständnis, wie man es auch bei Human League finden könnte. Dazu trägt auch die gelungene Stimmperformance von Scissor Sisters-Sänger Jake Shears bei. Berührungssängste finden sich auch auf "Robert's Reason" keine. Ein oldschooliger House-Groove bildet das Fundament, auf dem Owens' soulige Stimme bestens zur Geltung kommt.

Das Stück ist denn auch der offensichtlichste Clubhit des gesamten Albums. Bei der derzeitigen Begeisterung, mit der Deephouse eine Renaissance in der Disco feiert, dürfte sich "Robert's Reason" schnell in den Cases zahlreicher DJs wiederfinden. Nicht zu Unrecht, schließlich sorgt der Track innerhalb von Sekunden für eine spürbare Steigerung des Wohlbefindens. Schade nur, dass "Convivial" diesen guten Vibe nicht über die volle Spielzeit halten kann.

Joilet Blox Review

Towarzyski Uomo: Pod koniec tego tygodnia pojawi się na rynku czwarty album Uomo - kameleonowego, organicznego projektu samego Sasu Ripatti. Longplay "Convivial" będzie jeszcze bardziej odważnym oraz jawnym wejściem tego Fina w świat muzyki pop aniżeli to miało miejsce na jego poprzednim krążku "Paper Tigers".

Okladka albumu: Od kilku lat Sasu swoim zaawansowanym, laboratoryjnym klikowym house'm przepełnionym energią groove, wyznacza kolejne tory, po których podąża współczesna elektroniczna muzyka taneczna. Choć od czasów trzeciego albumu Uomo "Paper Tigers", Ripatti niebezpiecznie i ryzykowne prowadzi konszachty pomiędzy regułami popu a implementacją w te ramy swoich studyjnych eksperymentów. Płyta "Convivial" będzie naturalnym procesem, kolejnym etapem. Chociaż sam Sasu wystrzega się tego, jakoby za jego kolejnym albumem kryły się jakieś szczególne i wyraziste przesłania tudzież ładunek pewnego spodziewanego dźwiękowego rezultatu. Wskazuje na to sam proces powstawania czwartego longplay'a Uomo. Przebiegał dwuetapowo oraz niezależnie. Wpierw Sasu stworzył podkłady muzyczne w formie dziewięciu utworów w swoich rodzinnych Helsinkach. Następnie wykończył je, tzn. przetransformował je na kształt piosenek w Berlinie przy współpracy grona wokalistów - swoich dobrych znajomych. Główne skrzypce będzie krajanka Ripatti - piosenkarka Johanna Iivanainen. To właśnie ją Uomo przekonał do wcześniejszego przedsięwzięcia, jakim był krążek "Paper Tigers". Swoje umiejętności wokalne wykażą także: Apparat, Cassy oraz Jake Shears z Scissor Sisters.

Sasu Ripatti aka Uomo: Gwoździem piosenkowej struktury nagrań "Convivial" będzie pojawienie się samego Robert'a Owens'a ukazujący muzyczną duszę Chicago w "Robert's Reason". O ile Sasu stworzył podkłady w samotności, o tyle warstwę liryczną oddał ku wolnej indywidualnej interpretacji. Dzięki temu najnowszy album Ripatti ma sprawiać wrażenie nowego punktu wyjścia w jego karierze. A to dzięki nowym ludziom, którzy generują nowe doznania i doświadczenia. Nie bez znaczenia były również ostatnie fascynację tego fińskiego artysty muzyką pop oraz dance. Sam

tytuł albumu "Convivial" określa jego charakter - imprezowy. Oczywiście w afirmacyjny luomo'wy, nietypowy sposób, jak to zrobił w "Love You All" (w którym półballadowy nastrój electro popu łamie się pod wpływem 2stepowego rytmu) lub też w "Slow Dying Places" (delikatna, liściasta poptronika została porwana przez idmowy wiatr).

Czwarty longplay Luomo pojawi się 24 października nakładem Huume Recordings. Z zawartością tego krążka Sasu można zapoznać się w tym miejscu. Warto zaznaczyć fakt, iż Ripatti już teraz zapowiedział swój kolejny album stworzony razem z Moritz'em Von Oswald'em (połową Basic Channel), który pojawi się w przyszłym roku.

Soundlike.be Review

Apparat, Scissor Sister Jake Shears en Chicago house-legende Robert Owens verlenen vocale ondersteuning aan de gesofisticeerde microhouse en speelse experimentele pop van de Finse producer Sasu Ripatti. 'Convivial', de vierde plaat die Ripatti uitbrengt als Luomo, laat vanaf de eerste secuur gekozen bliep, groove en loop horen waartoe een decennium lang verfijnen en bijschaven van je eigen stijl kunnen leiden: uitgepuurde, complex gelaagde voorspel-electronica die je met de ogen toe en een glimlach rond de mond streelt en kietelt van begin tot eind. Luomo, niet toevallig Fins voor 'organisch', laat rond elk van de stemmen verschillende, passende omgevingen woekeren uit fijne laagjes van smeulige beats, golvende synths en knisperende clicks. Een speciale vermelding gaat naar Apparat, die zich duidelijk steeds zekerder voelt voor de microfoon en in het bezwerende "Love You All" zijn sterkste vocale prestatie tot nu levert. Zijn ijle stem laat de zinnen "I want to love you, I want to save you" dreigend door het nummer spoken, achternagezeten door een gehaaste drumbeat. Op "Sleep Tonight" vertrekt Ripatti dan weer van een oersimpele loop die hij laag na laag laat ontvouwen tot een killer danstrack. Hij weet de uitbundigheid in dit nummer zo te doseren, dat je als luisteraar voortdurend anticipeert op de energie die komen zal, maar uiteindelijk nooit losbarst. Zo'n beheersing is enkel de allergrootsten gegeven.